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Thomas Gills

OF St. Edmund's Bury in Suffolk,

Upon the Recovery of his

SIGHT,

AND THE

Second Loss thereof.

READER, if in these following Lines you find
Nought worth your Time or Money, please to know
The Author is Unlearned, Lame and Blind;

And 'tis no wonder if his Verse be so.
Yet wholly lost your Money will not be,
Because bestowed on one in Poverty.
Then pray your Pardon and your Pity grant,
Excuse his Faults, and remedy his Want.

LONG had I languish'd in continual Night,
Long mourn'd the grievous loss of strength and sight;
Long had I sought to have the cause remov'd,
In vain Advices, Means and Medicines prov'd.
When lo, the Almighty looking with Compassion
Upon my Darkness, Griefs and Desolation,

Was pleas'd of his meer bounty to restore
 Part of that Sight and Strength I had before.
 The Pain forsook my feeble Feet and Knees,
 And new-returning Strength came by degrees.
 As gradually and slowly came my Sight,
 At first confusedly I saw Day-light,
 And knew when it was Gloomy, and when Bright.
 Then Humane Bodies when approaching near,
 Strange moving Forms like Shadows did appear.
 Next I distinguish'd Colours near the Eye,
 And various Objects I discern'd when nigh,
 Which afterwards at distance I discern'd.
 Alone I ventur'd forth my poor abode,
 In well-known Paths with careful Steps I trod ;
 Till by degrees I better saw my way,
 And could discern what Obstacles there lay.
 Each Day with joy and wonder I beheld
 Some Object long before from me conceal'd.
 But long 'twas e'er I could distinguish Faces,
 Or tell their different Features, Forms and Graces ;
 Which I at length could do when near the Light,
 Plac'd with the best advantage to my Sight.
 Then could I walk th' adjacent Fields alone,
 And sometimes ramble to a Neighbouring Town.
 Oh ! what delight I took to tread the Fields,
 And view the Beauties Spring and Summer yields.
 Although I could at no great distance see,
 Nor yet describe near Objects perfectly ;
 For when they to my sight themselves disclos'd,
 A subtle Vail of Dimness interpos'd :
 Yet this bless'd, tho' imperfect, Restauration,
 (Beyond my Merit or my Expectation,)
 Brought with it a most perfect Consolation.
 I want sufficient Language to Express,
 My boundless Joy, Content and Happiness.
 But Ah ! the Fleeting state of Worldly Joys,
 Which each Mischance or Malady destroys.

I had

I had not long enjoy'd this valued sight,
 (Short seems the time that passes with delight),
 But lo! o'th' sudden all was lost again,
 My Head and Eye was seiz'd with grievous pain:
 The Cause, Defluetions and an Inflammation,
 Th' Effect, of Sight a Second Depravation.
 Thus did my former Gloomy Grievs return,
 And I again the loss of seeing mourn.
 Those painful Remedies applied before,
 Again were practiz'd on me; yea, and more,
 To drive away or mollifie the pain,
 But all Endeavours fruitless prov'd and vain.
 And as I was before both Blind and Lane,
 So now again those VVoes together came.
 A Pain and Swelling seiz'd my Foot and Knee;
 Thus Blindness, Lameness, Pain and Poverty,
 Fell all at once on poor afflicted me.
 In this deplorable and wretched state,
 Ready to sink beneath my sorrows weight,
 I summon'd all my Courage to my aid,
 Remember'd former resolutions made,
 And strove to do what I before had said.
 But all my best Efforts were (I confess)
 Too weak my rising Passions to suppress;
 My Sorrows burst forth in Complaints and Cries,
 And showers of Tears from my benighted Eyes.
 Sometimes indeed I would reflect with shame
 Upon my self, and my impatience blame,
 And lifting up my Heart to God, I pray'd,
 And thus, with interrupting Groans I said;
 Pardon, Oh! God, my fond impatient Grief,
 Oh! give me patience, or my VVoes relieve;
 Forgive the murmuring Speeches I have made,
 Own my weakness, and I beg thy aid.
 I know thou send'st Afflictions for my good,
 And wish I could endure them as I shou'd;
 But Oh! 'tis very hard to Flesh and Blood.

Nature and self-love makes us love our ease,
 And grief our Minds when pain our Bodies seize:
 Lord, let thy powerful Grace in thy poor Creature,
 Make easie that which seems so hard to Nature;
 Preserve me from Impatience and Dejection,
 Under thy Just and Fatherly Correction,
 Let me adore thy Hand, and kiss thy Rod,
 And bow beneath thy Scourges, Oh! my God.
 The time of Health which lately I enjoy'd,
 Was not so as it ought to have been imploy'd,
 Then since repeated Crimes thy VVrath provokes,
 'Tis just thou should'st reiterate thy strokes.
 Thus did I pray in my distress'd Condition,
 And now, O God! I make the same Petition;
 Oh! strengthen me against the next occasion,
 To bear with Patience, Love and Resignation.
 Thou now hast given me a breathing space,
 And made my Sickness, Pains, and Sorrows cease;
 Thou hast again restor'd me some small light,
 Enough with care to guide my steps aright.
 Lord, make me truly thankful for the same,
 And let me ever praise and bleis thy Name.
 And thou who didst this little Sight restore,
 I hope in Mercy will afford me more;
 But if thou'rt pleas'd I shall no more receive,
 Or if thou take that from me which I have,
 Thy Holy VVill be always done on me;
 I'll strive to be content whate'er it be.
 I purpos'd thus before, but fail'd, 'tis true,
 Yet I again my good resolves renew:
 He is not wholly vanquish'd in the Field,
 VVho tho' he falls o'erpowered, yet ne'er will yield.
 But you to whom the liberal Hand of Heaven,
 Has all the precious gifts of Nature given:
 You who enjoy Health, Hearing, Speech and Sight,
 Oh! prize and use those benefits aright;
 Inestimable is their worth, and no Man
 Ought to esteem them less for being Common;

God gives you them to Honour, Serve, and Love him;
 Let not th' abuse of them to Anger move him;
 Lest he deprive you of them by some cross,
 And make you know their value by their loss.
 He that wants one, particularly Sight,
 That useful Sense for Profit and Delight;
 How miserably wretched he must be,
 May you ne'er know, but as you hear from me.

On the Misery of Blindness.

THAT poor unhappy Man that's Stone-blind, hath
 A kind of dying Life or living Death;
 Dead to all outward Objects, yet he lives
 To know what VVoes the want of Seeing gives:
 On every side he feeleth Misery,
 But no where can a glimpse of Comfort see:
 In Summer time he feels the scorching Heat,
 And from his dark Eyes wipes the Dust and Sweat;
 But never sees the Beauties which it yields,
 Or how it decks the Meadows, Groves and Fields:
 In Gardens he may smell each fragrant Bed.
 But sees not there Dame *Flora's* Tap'stries spread;
 With various Flowers and Fruits Enamelled.
 These pleasing Objects, and a thousand more,
 The Works of Art, or Fruits of Natures Store,
 Whatever may in curious minds incite,
 Surprizing wonder, or a soft delight;
 All these he knows by others are beheld,
 And mourns that they are all from him conceal'd.
 O'ershadowed with continual Nights black wings,
 To him the Sun no Light, no Comfort brings.
 He never sees the Moon's fair Silver Horns;
 Nor these Gold Spangles which the Sky

He knows no otherwise but by his Ears,
 When Night approaches, or when Day appears;
 Alike incapable of Work and Play,
 In tiresom idleness he spends the Day.
 Alone for what he wants he gropes about,
 Which many times tho' near he finds not out.
 VVhen sudden cries arise from sudden ills,
 His panting Breast what fear and horreur fills,
 His gloomy Thoughts conceive the dire mishap,
 Greater than 'tis, and ponders his escape,
 He sees not what he Eats nor what he Drinks,
 He all (if told so) sound and cleanly thinks:
 Till in some foul ungrateful Moriel he
 Experience by his Taste the contrary.
 And when compell'd by need he walks abroad,
 VVith trembling Limbs he treads his unseen Road,
 And sounds the Ground each step before 'tis trod.
 If then with rattling noise a Cart or Coach,
 Furiously driven, does that way approach,
 Close to the VVall he shrinks with trembling fear,
 And Crushing dread by its approach too near.
 If some unusual Obstacle occur
 In his dark way, he can no further stir.
 Not knowing how to pass by, he must stand
 Till guided on by some assisting Hand.
 Numberless ills to him are incident,
 Which he not sees, nor knows how to prevent:
 In sad complaints and sighs he spends his Breath,
 And often wishes, longs and prays for Death.
 His only comfort is, (and sure 'tis better,
 Than all the World's delights can give, and greater,)
 That if he does his Cross with patience bear,
 Make Heaven his only hope, his aim, his care,
 And uses pious Thoughts, and frequent Prayer,
 When that expected hour is come, that Death
 With its cold Hand shall stop his yielding Breath,

(7)

And break the Earthen House of Woe and Sin,
Which his Immortal Soul's imprison'd in,
Then will his Miseries end and Joys begin.
From this dark Cage his Spirit takes its flight,
To boundless Regions of Eternal Light,
Where in Immenfive Joy and Pleasure he
Shall Everlasting Glorious Objects see.

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